President's Message

I was in Canberra last week attending an ALGA Board meeting and the National General Assembly (NGA) of Local Government, and it was good to meet up with delegates from Tasmania. This year’s NGA was again a great opportunity to meet and discuss local government issues with a range of elected members and CEO’s from around Australia, and be addressed by our political leaders, although the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition were unavailable.

A panel discussion on the financial recognition of Local Government in the Australian Constitution was one of the highlights of the NGA. With the Australian Government waiting for the High Court’s decision on the ‘Williams Case’, it was good news that the High Court was scheduled to release their decision just prior to the close of the NGA. The Williams Case centred on the ability of the Commonwealth to fund chaplaincy programs in public schools. The Court found that the Commonwealth does not have the power to provide direct funding in areas and to organisations outside their constitutional responsibility.

Constitutional lawyer, Professor George Williams, who has been providing advice to ALGA, spoke via Skype to the NGA following the decision and his advice was that it certainly strengthens the Local Government position to achieve financial recognition in the Constitution. Professor Williams will be providing ALGA with a more detailed analysis of the decision and what it means in a Local Government context.

Professor Williams and ALGA President, Genia McCaffery, will be providing the very latest position with regards to this important issue at the LGAT Conference and I encourage your attendance. Looking at the program that has been developed for this year’s event, it is a conference not to be missed! If you have not already done so, please register this week as the conference is a valuable learning opportunity with much fun and friendship being generated.

In closing, I thank councils very sincerely for the support shown to me in the election for President of LGAT for a further term, I will continue to represent you to the best of my ability. Congratulations to the successful elected members who have been elected to the General Management Committee of LGAT, we have a great team and I look forward to us working together for the benefit of Local Government in Tasmania.

Local Government Calls for National Commitment to Priorities

Around 850 council representatives met in Canberra last week for the Australian Local Government Association’s National General Assembly of Local Government. Delegates threw their support behind a motion requesting that the Australian Government confirm its commitment to holding a referendum on the financial recognition of Local Government in the Australian Constitution.

ALGA President, Mayor Genia McCaffery, said the issue of constitutional recognition remains a priority for Local Government to ensure federal funding remains available to provide essential local community infrastructure and services. The Minister for Local Government, Simon Crean, responded saying that the Government is prepared to take the issue to referendum at the next election if it is confident that it will be supported by voters. The Government has until October to make a decision.

Last Chance to Register for the 100th LGAT Conference

Be sure not to miss LGAT’s 100th Local Government Conference, themed Treasuring the Past, Transforming the Future, to be held from 11-13 July, at Wrest Point in Hobart. The exciting line-up of plenary speakers includes: Professor Brian Dollery who asks Is Amalgamation the Silver Bullet in Local Government?; Michael McQueen on Winning the Battle for Relevance; and Rob Redenbach, who will reveal the 7 Secrets for Dealing with People. The Conference Dinner, sponsored by MAV Insurance, will be held on 12 July. Partners are welcome. For a copy of the Conference Program and Registration Form, visit the LGAT website at www.lgat.tas.gov.au/page.aspx?u=209.
Webinars for Local Government

At a recent meeting of the Local Government Workforce Development Group, the Local Government Association of New South Wales and the Local Government Shires Association offered to all other Local Government Associations the opportunity to participate in Local Government oriented webinars. Four webinars have been produced already on Planning for the Carbon Tax on Local Government, How to Write Winning Grant Funding Applications, Engaging your Communities, and Managing Time and Stress. Webinars will come at a cost in future (see the LGAT website) but as a taster, a FREE webinar on Coaching and Mentoring Skills will be held from 12.30pm - 1.30pm, on 28 June. The webinar will focus on basic coaching principles, different coaching and mentoring styles, coaching mistakes, effective coaching skills and techniques, and how to increase someone’s performance through coaching and mentoring. To register for the live event or to hear a recorded session, go to www.cpdlive.com/lgat/index.html.

Comment Sought on Youth Ethics Consultation Paper

Submissions for the Youth Ethics Framework for Tasmania Consultation Paper will close on 30 June. The Youth Ethics Working Group in Tasmania welcome input from workers and organisations that engage young people, including government agencies. They also welcome input from young people. Although there are ethical guidelines within issue-specific areas of practice, there are no overarching national youth guidelines across all areas of practice. The results of this consultation process will feed into national discussions to clarify youth services in Australia. The consultation paper can be found at the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) website at www.ynot.org.au. For more information, please contact the YNOT office at admin@ynot.org.au, or call 6223 5511.

Nominations Invited for Local Government Award for Tourism

In recognition of the vital role Local Government plays in the Tasmanian tourism industry, a Tasmanian Tourism Award category will be offered to recognise those councils who put a real focus on tourism and support their local industry. The Local Government Award for Tourism is being offered as part of the Australian Tourism Awards program, designed to: promote and reward business excellence within the industry; encourage and celebrate professionalism, creativity and innovation; and provide a benchmark for best practice in the tourism industry. The Tourism Industry Council Tasmania (TICT) will be offering support to entrants through a workshop program being held in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. Nominations close on 13 July. For further information, visit tict.com.au/tas-tourism-awards.

Keep Australia Beautiful Beverage Container Recycling Grants Program Now Open

The Keep Australia Beautiful grants, funded by the Coca-Cola Foundation, are open to all communities across Australia with grants of up to $10,000 per applicant available for projects that will result in a measurable increase in beverage container recycling in local communities. Applications are open to community groups, local associations, small to medium enterprises and local councils across four categories. The community grants program provides local communities with the opportunity to play an active role in increasing the recovery and recycling of beverage containers in their local area, and help divert them from unnecessarily ending up in landfill. Applications close on 20 July. Application forms are available online from www.kab.org.au. Click ‘Get Involved’ and ‘Community Grants’.

2012 Tasmanian Human Rights Awards

Nominations are now open for the 2012 Tasmanian Human Rights Awards. This is your opportunity to identify people and organisations across Tasmania who have made an outstanding contribution to human rights protection and promotion. There are six award categories including: Individual Human Rights Award; Youth Human Rights Award; and the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Community Focused Activity Human Rights Award. For details, visit www.afairerworld.org/_HRWeek/award.html.

Robbie Walsh Comes up Trumps at Tom Quilty 2012

Waratah-Wynyard Council Mayor, Clr Robbie Walsh was successful in recently completing the Tom Quilty Gold Cup at St Helens. He rode 160km and gained his buckle. He was also the second Heavyweight to cross the line and then turned around and won the Best Conditioned Horse for the Heavyweight division. Robbie reckons he can’t drive a tractor but boy, can he ride a horse!

Upcoming Events

AGM / General Meeting, Hobart 11 July
100th Local Government Conference, Hobart 12-13 July